

**MINUTES (Unapproved)**  
**UTAH CONSERVATION COMMISSION (UCC) MEETING**  
Regular Meeting, June 18, 2008  
Tremonton, UT

**ATTENDANCE:**

**Willard "Bill" Rasmussen**, *President, UACD, act for Leonard M. Blackham, Commissioner, Utah Department of Agriculture and Food (UDAF), Standing UCC Ex-officio Chair*

Appointed Conservation District (CD)

Supervisor UCC Members:

**S. Bruce Karren**, *acting for Paul Leishman, Zone 1*

**Ben Thurgood**, *Zone 2*

**Wendell Stenbridge**, *Zone 3*

**Douglas Pace**, *acting Randy Greenhalgh, Zone 4*

**Allen Henrie**, *Zone 5*

**Ed Bench**, *Zone 6*

**Bob Barry**, *Zone 7*

Appointed CD Alternate UCC Members:

**Alan Brown**, *Zone 3*

Standing Ex-Officio UCC Voting Members:

**V. Philip Rasmussen**, *UT State University Extension (USU)*

**Mike Reichert**, *Water Quality Division, Utah Department of Environmental acting for Walt Baker*

**Mike Styler**, *Utah Department of Natural Resources (UDNR)*

**Joel Merritt**, *acting for Tim Higgs, Utah Weed Supervisors Association*

**Jay Tanner**, *UDAF State Grazing Advisory Board*

**Kevin Carter**, *Director, Utah School and Institutional Trust Lands Administration*

Conservation Partners Representatives:

**Sylvia Gillen**, *Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS-UT), USDA*

**Chuck Gay**, *USU Extension*

**Rory Reynolds**, *Department of Natural Resources*

**Joe Hill**, *Farm Service Agency*

Conservation Partners Representatives con't  
**Gordon Younker**, *Executive Vice President UACD*

**Thayne Mickelson**, *Zone 1 Coordinator, UACD*

**Heather Johnson**, *Job-share Zone 2 Coordinator, UACD*

**Desiree Van Dyke**, *Job-share Zone 2 Coordinator, UACD*

**Ray Loveless**, *Zone 3 Coordinator, UACD*

**David Pace**, *Zone 4 Coordinator, UACD*

**Tyce Palmer**, *Zone 5 Coordinator, UACD*

**Darrell Gillman**, *Zone 6 Coordinator, UACD*

Department of Agriculture and Food:

**Kathleen Clarke**, *Deputy Commissioner*

**George Hopkin**, *Director, Conservation & Resource Management Division (C&RM)*

**Bill Hopkin**, *Director, Grazing Improvement Program*

**Roy Gunnell**, *Environmental Scientist C&RM*  
**K. N. "Jake" Jacobson**, *UCC Admin. Officer, Div. C&RM*

**Sherie Edginton**, *UCC Secretary, Div. C&RM*

**Richard Sandberg**, *Administrator, Agricultural Loans Section, C&RM*

**Clair Allen**, *Director, Plant Industry*

Guests:

**Jimi Gragg**, *UDNR/Wildlife Resources*

**Dana Dolsen**, *UDNR/Wildlife Resources*

**Tim Garcia**, *USDA Forest Service*

**Craig Poulson**, *Duchesne County CD/ Watershed Coordinator*

**Lisa Coverdale**, *NRCS*

**Hue Dang**, *NRCS*

**Kenneth R Cardon**, *North Cache CD*

**Shaun Bushman**, *USDA-ARS Forage and Range Research*

**Blair Waldron**, *USDA-ARS Forage and Range Research*

**Gene Drake**, *Salt Lake CD*

**Keith Covington**, *Timp/Nebo & Alpine CDs*

**Jan Anderson**, *Utah Farm Bureau*

**SUMMARY OF COMMISSION ACTIONS**

1. Minutes of the March 10, 2008 UCC meeting and May 9, 2008 UCC Executive meeting approved Page 2
2. ARDL Zone Funding Allocation Page 4

3. Ratification of TA Re-allocation Page 4
4. Continuation of the Graham S. Quate Award Page 4
5. Approve holding back UACD Contract Funds to Cover 4th Quarter SERA Page 5
6. Approve Changes to CD SERA Policies and Rate for FY09 Page 5

### **UCC MEETING - CALL TO ORDER**

Utah Association of Conservation District (UACD) President, Willard "Bill" Rasmussen, acting for Utah Conservation Commission (UCC) Chairman, called the meeting to order at 1:03 P.M.

### **APPROVAL OF MARCH AND MAY UCC MEETING MINUTES**

Acting Chairman Rasmussen indicated that the March 10, 2008 UCC meeting, and the May 9, 2008 Executive meeting minutes drafts were distributed electronically and hard copy with this meeting notice. He asked for action on these minutes. **The motion was made by Mr. Jay Tanner to approve the March 10, 2008 UCC, and May 9, 2008 UCC Expanded Executive meeting minutes as distributed, seconded by Mr. Bruce Karren. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote.**

### **UDAF INVASIVE SPECIES MITIGATION PROGRAM**

#### Wildland Fire Mitigation Project Ranking Criteria & Request for Proposals Status

Ms. Kathleen Clarke, UDAF Deputy Commissioner, reported that the 2008 State Legislature created within UDAF the Invasive Species Mitigation Fund and appropriated \$2 million for FY09 projects. The purpose of this program and projects is to control or eliminate invasive plant species to help minimize the risk of future wild fires in some targeted areas in Utah. This is also referred to as the UDAF War-on-Cheatgrass Initiative. Funds can be used either on private or public lands but requires at least an equal funds match if used on federal lands.

Enabling legislation requires this program and projects receive consultation with the Utah Department of Natural Resources (UDNR) and the UCC. It is also being coordinated with the Utah Partners for Conservation & Development (UtahPCD). Notices, information and request for project proposals were provided to UCC members prior to this meeting and distributed widely. It listed the criteria that will be used to choose projects. There is an inter-agency assessment team, with several UDNR employee members, that developed the ranking criteria. They will meet on July 9, 2008, to start the review and ranking of the project proposals. Then on July 28 the process and projects will be presented to the UCC in an electronic meeting. The UDAF would like to have work started this fall on projects that receive the highest ranking and are funded. She asked that partners and landowners who have projects in mind but won't be ready for this round of funding, send these projects in anyway so it can be shown that there is need for future funding.

### **UCC COMMISSIONERS REPORTS**

#### Conservation Districts

Mr. Bill Rasmussen, UACD President, reported that 37 UACD & conservation district (CD) employees and CD Supervisors have completed the CD training modules offered on the Internet. UACD & CD employees that finish the training modules will receive a jacket. Many will receive their jacket at the July 16-17 all UACD/CD employees training meeting. CD Supervisors who complete all the modules will receive their jacket at the November UACD Convention/UtahPCD Conference. This training program is receiving attention by other conservation districts and their partners across the nation.

### State Grazing Advisory Board Report

Mr. Jay Tanner, chair of the UDAF State Grazing Advisory Board, reported this board met this morning. They advise the department on the Grazing Improvement Program (GIP). The FY08 GIP funded projects are on track. He welcomed Allen Henrie to the board as the UCC representative.

### County Weed Supervisors Association

Mr. Joel Merritt, Cache County Weed Supervisor, reported on the annual weed supervisors training conference was held recently in Moab. Most the state's Cooperative Weed Management Agencies (CWMA) are successful with weed control. Mr. Clair Allen, UDAF Plant Industry Director, reported the Skyline CWMA in Emery County, has been working with the Boy Scouts of America (BSA) on Tamarisk removal. This is one of five BSA natural resource protection/conservation projects going on throughout the country.

### USU Extension

Dr. Phil Rasmussen, USU Extension & USDA Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) Director for the Western states, reported he recently met and talked with Mr. Gus Hughbanks, Washington State NRCS State Conservationist, concerning sustainable agriculture and natural resource conservation. The SARE program is trying to better align sustainable agriculture with soil and water conservation since they are so closely tied.

## **USDA, ARS FORAGE AND RANGE RESEARCH LABORATORY PRESENTATION**

Dr. Shaun Bushman, USDA-ARS Forage and Range Researcher, reported on the work the research lab does. The lab is located on the USU campus. There are 5 workgroups with 12 scientists at this lab complex. The goal of the lab is to broaden the plant variety available to producers, and develop plants that meet the needs of the land and citizens of the nation. One of the lab's current major projects is to develop plants that can compete or overtake Cheatgrass. He gave a PowerPoint presentation showing new forage grasses such as Hycrest II crested wheatgrass and Bozoisky II Russian wild rye.

## **COUNTY (NATURAL RESOURCES) LOCAL WORK GROUPS: CD LED**

### Status Reports

Over the past several months the conservation districts supervisors, with support from their staff and USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service, led Local Work Groups meetings for all of Utah's 29 counties. UACD Zone Coordinators had been asked to prepare and submit a summary of the detailed reports generated from these meetings for this UCC meeting and for other uses. These summaries or detailed reports were provided to UCC members. The reports summarized natural resource concerns priorities and issues within the counties.

### Status of FY09 EQIP Local (County) Fund Pool Criteria & Allocations

Ms. Sylvia Gillen, NRCS State Conservationist, reported that convening these local work groups is the second step in awarding NRCS Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP) project funds. The first was the county natural resource assessments carried out since 2005 by the core conservation partnership UCC/UDAF-UACD/CDs-NRCS. The local work groups will control 1/3 of the ranking criteria points for funding local projects. Utah's USDA State Technical Advisory Committee (STAC) will use the assessments and local work group reports to find re-occurring natural resource problems in the different counties. This will help define the state level 1/3 EQIP ranking points. The last 1/3 EQIP points will be based on national priorities as spelled out in the new Farm Bill.

Ms. Gillen indicated that the new US Farm Bill requires a change to Utah's STAC structure from the way it has been over the past several years. This committee is an advisory board for the NRCS State Conservationist and other USDA agencies. She will keep the UCC informed on the STAC re-structuring process.

## UCC & CONSERVATION DISTRICTS (CD) BUSINESS ITEMS

### Agriculture Resource Development Loan (ARDL) Program Update

Mr. Richard Sandberg, Administrator UDAF Agricultural Loans Section, reported on the ARDL program status as of May 31, 2008. The total Legislative appropriation is \$18,946,530. The principal balance of loans is \$19,796,648, with \$1,844,487 in undisbursed funds, totaling \$21,641,134. There are 703 contracted loans, and 76 active applications. The average loan size is \$64,278. There were 3 loans 30 days past due. Principal repayments year to date are \$3,434,463; interest payments are \$568,304; penalty payments are \$9,532, totaling \$4,012,299. There have been 76 loans paid off and 51 new loans at a total of \$3,208,132. The average new loan size is \$62,905. \$123,427 was paid to UACD in TA fees.

There is \$123,393 in the ARDL bank account, and \$9,090,813 in the investment account. There is \$1,844,487 in undisbursed loans. There is \$5,073,868 in loan applications in process and \$1,356,577 in zone allocations, totaling \$6,430,445.

The following is proposed Zone allocations: Zone 1 had a beginning balance of \$608,122.; \$0 was added totaling \$608,122. Zone 2 had a beginning balance of \$215,699.; \$0 was added totaling \$215,699. Zone 3 had a beginning balance of -\$63,768.; \$200,000 was added totaling \$136,232. Zone 4 had a beginning balance of -\$204,564; \$500,000 was added totaling \$295,436. Zone 5 had a beginning balance of \$218,464; \$0 was added totaling \$218,464. Zone 6 had a beginning balance of \$438,547; \$0 was added totaling \$438,547. Zone 7 had a beginning balance of \$144,077; \$39,274 was added totaling \$383,351. **A motion was made by Mr. Ben Thurgood to reallocate \$939,274, seconded by Mr. Allen Henrie. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote.**

Mr. Sandberg reported on a loan that was approved previously by the Commission's ARDL Loan Approval Committee. The loan is for Kevin Chris Fullmer and Jolene A. Fullmer. This loan is to purchase and install two linear sprinkler irrigation systems to increase irrigation efficiency from flood to linear watering.

### UCC FY09 TA Grant Allocation Decision

Mr. Jake Jacobson addressed the allocation of the UCC's Technical Assistance Project Grant Program. The UCC had clarified program policy and allocated \$84,000 for this program for 2008-2009 fiscal year (FY09) in its March meeting. A handout that summarized the grant applications for FY09 was provided. The UCC Executive Committee met May 9, 2008 and reviewed the FY09 applications. The committee recommended that the \$5,000.00 request to support the statewide Nature High Camp application be approved by the full Commission. The application was submitted by the San Rafael CD and was to be managed by them. But since then it has been recommended that the funds be managed by UACD. Per the TA Grant program policy the balance of \$79,000 will be split evenly among the seven conservation district zones. Each zone's allotment will be \$11,285 to be divided among their CDs as directed by their Zone Executive Committee. **A motion was made by Mr. Edmund Bench to accept the recommendations of the UCC Executive Committee for the FY09 UCC Technical Assistance Grant program allocation, seconded by Mr. Ben Thurgood. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote.**

### UCC Graham S. Quate Award Decision

Mr. Jake Jacobson reported that the UCC Executive Committee at its May 9, 2008 meeting recommended that the Commission's Graham S. Quate Conservationist Award program be continued for the 2008-2009 fiscal year. The purpose of this annual award is for the Utah Conservation Commission (UCC) to recognize the outstanding service of a least one career employee of a Utah Partners for Conservation and Development (UtahPCD) signatory agency as that employee works with one or more of Utah's conservation districts and their cooperators to get conservation on the land. It has been given each year since 1984. A handout with a description and an application form of this award program was provided with the meeting notice and at the meeting. **A motion to continue the Graham S. Quate Award for FY09 was made by Mr. Wendell Stembridge, seconded by Mr. Allen Henrie. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote.**

#### Supervisor Expense Reimbursement Account (SERA) FY09 Policy & Rates Action

Mr. Jake Jacobson reported that the SERA policy needed to be amended due to changes in the conservation district law and state rates for hotel room reimbursements, mileage and meals. A few other changes were recommended to bring the policy into compliance with current practices. A draft with these changes was distributed with the meeting notice and available at the meeting. He also reported that the projected FY08 SERA claims will exceed available funds by an estimate of \$13,000. Mr. Gordon Younker suggested that UCC/UDAF could hold back enough money from the UACD FY08 contract final payment to pay for the SERA claims that may not be covered. **A motion was made to keep enough funds from the UACD contract to pay for FY08 SERA claims in excess of funds available by Mr. Jay Tanner, seconded by Mr. Allen Henrie. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote. Another motion was made to approve recommended changes in the SERA Policy and rate appendix by Mr. Phil Rasmussen, seconded by Mr. Bruce Karren. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote.**

#### **OTHER ITEMS**

Mr. Thayne Mickelson reported on some potential problems for the state's Animal Feeding Operation/ Concentrated Animal Feeding Operation (AFO/CAFO) livestock producer because of some US EPA national criteria changes. He felt there might be a need for additional training and technical assistance for these producers to keep their state CAFO permits in compliant.

#### **CALENDAR OF FUTURE EVENTS**

1. 2008 Conservation Fair/Field Day: June 18-19 in Northern Utah & West Box Elder CDs
2. First UCC Electronic Meeting: July 28, 2008 10: a.m.- 12 noon
3. Next Two 2008 Face-to-Face UCC Meetings: Sept 16, Cedar City & Nov 12, Layton
4. 2008 NACD SW-Pacific Regions Meeting, Sept 14-16, Aptos, CA (*This is a change from earlier listings.*)
5. 2008 Utah NPS Water Quality Conference, Sept 17-19 Cedar City
6. 2008 UACD/UtahPCD Annual Convention/Conference: Nov 13-14 in Davis Co. Conference Center

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

Meeting adjourned 2:54 p.m. President Rasmussen invited Commissioner Members, alternates and partners to stay if they wished for the Utah Partners for Conservation & Development Directors Council meeting.

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**Sherie Edginton, Conservation Program Secretary**

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**K.N. "Jake" Jacobson, UCC Administrative Officer**